The National Security Council came into being less than ten years ago; it is, as DILLON ANDERSON *says, "a relatively new mechanism in our Government," and one which has been greatly amplified under President Eisenhower. In the article which follows, Mr. Anderson gives us an objective, reassuring account of how it functions today. A Houston lawyer who served in the Army under Secretary Stimson during World War II, Mr. Anderson is today Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. His predecessor in that office, Robert Cutler, and Charles A. Haskins helped to adapt this material from a speech delivered before the Dallas Council on World Affairs.*

THE PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY

by DILLON ANDERSON

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IN THE "lucid view that hindsight affords," historians will one day record our country's successes and failures in world affairs during these pregnant middle years of the twentieth century. A hundred years hence, even the most superficial students of the record will be able to assess our progress toward our ultimate goal — just and lasting world peace. This hindsight, of course, is not available to those who must make the present decisions; they must trust to foresight. Hindsight discloses history's lessons, one of which is that history often repeats itself, and another that often history does not; these lessons must be blended rightly with the other elements of foresight if the true course is to be found. Only so, in our role of leader of the free world, can we make a realistic reckoning of probable future developments.

What are these other elements of a clear look ahead? Of what is foresight compounded — foresight that must enter into planning long-range national policy in the foreign field? These parts are vast and unbelievably complex. There are all the essential facts, foreign and domestic, which bear upon our posture in the presence of the world and our ability to maintain it: the economic, military, and political policies and capabilities of other nations; the ideologies and aspirations of peoples, and the varying degree of responsiveness of leaders to attitudes of their constituents; the shifts and tendencies in the never static alignments of nations; and the forces at work that presage further changes.

To these historical and factual data there must be applied the techniques of analysis, appraisal, imagination, judgment; then decision on policy objectives and planned courses of action to attain them. The test of the quality of the foresight in such matters can be severe, since the margin for error may not always be a wide one.

Under our Constitution the conduct of affairs affecting the national security is a settled Executive responsibility, though treaties must be approved by the Senate, and enactment by the Congress of appropriate legislation is a vital coördinate. And, of course, Congress alone may declare war. Since 1947, the crucible in which Executive policy in this field has been refined has been the National Security Council.

What is the National Security Council, and what are its origins? How are matters brought before it? How does it function? What does it produce? Since the Council was organized less than ten years ago; since its meetings are not publicized; since its deliberations, and even its agenda, are usually protected for security reasons, the answers to the foregoing questions are for the most part not widely known. There is, however, no secrecy about the mechanism of the National Security Council; and no reason exists why these questions may not be answered, provided there is neither disclosure of information which would prejudice the security of the United States, nor any revelation of the intimate discussions between the President and his advisers, which for obvious reasons must be privileged.

The concept of the Council was formalized during the years which followed World War II. This was a period in which total danger was still continuing; yet it was, at the same time, a period auguring vastly increased well-being for mankind if, in more assured peace, science and technology could provide better plowshares.

Our relatively new pre-eminence in world affairs, the commensurate responsibility for leadership in

the free world, and the realization by such thoughtful and patriotic men as James Forrestal that technological advances had created another kind of world — all these combined to convince our leaders in both the Executive and Legislative branches that national policy planning and formulation needed to be brought together at a central point which had to be the peak of government. The natural participants were the heads of the departments and agencies responsible for carrying out various elements of national security programs.

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THE use of interdepartmental committees for developing integrated policy was, of course, not a new one; many such committees had acted before, although on a more or less *ad hoc* basis. But here was a clear need for something more. In other words, no longer could appropriate military policy on the one hand or supportable foreign policy on the other be formulated in isolation one from the other; and by the same token neither military nor foreign policy could be considered adequately without taking into account the best integrated intelligence estimates of the world situation and the availability of U.S. resources to support our objectives and commitments with respect to the rest of the world. Moreover, decisions affecting related activities of several responsible departments could no longer be made safely on the ex parte presentation to the President by a single department head.

Thus, to meet the need for the integration of national security policy at the highest level, Congress enacted the National Security Act of 1947. That legislation, together with the 1949 Amendments, did four principal things: 1) it created the Department of Defense and brought together under it the Army, Navy, and Air Force; 2) it created a Central Intelligence Agency for the collation and appraisal, at one central point, of world intelligence relating to our national security; 3) it created the National Security Resources Board (now the Office of Defense Mobilization) "to advise the President concerning the coördination of military, industrial and civilian mobilization"; and 4) it established the National Security Council.

The statutory duties of the Council are, in substance, as shown in the following excerpts from the law: —

". . . to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security so as to enable the military services and the other departments and agencies of the Government to coöperate more effectively in matters involving the national security. . . ."

". . . to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States in relation to our actual and potential military power . . .".

and

". . . to consider policies on matters of common interest to the departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security, and to make recommendations to the President in connection therewith."

Thus the Congress carefully recognized the presidential prerogatives which follow his constitutional responsibility, the duty of decision. The other Council members are no more than an advisory body. As such, the Council may examine, assess, and advise, but it does not decide; it is limited to making *recommendations* to the President. Thus, with one exception noted later, the Council does not act in a corporate way as a Board of Directors; nor does it conduct operations or issue directives. Only the *President* decides.

The Council has five statutory members, beginning with the President, who presides at its meetings. The other four statutory members of the Council are: —

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization.

The reasons for including these officials are readily apparent. The Vice President is there primarily to ensure Executive continuity, though he also brings to the Council the benefit of his judgment and experience, including that gained as presiding officer in the upper house of Congress. The Secretary of State is present as the President's chief adviser on foreign relations. The Secretary of Defense represents the three combined military services. And the Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization brings to the Council an appraisal of our domestic resources in connection with his responsibilities for formulating plans and programs for industrial mobilization, and for ensuring that we maintain a maximum degree of readiness for emergency in respect to materials, production, and manpower to support our military needs.

Two other statutory agencies also participate in Council affairs: the Central Intelligence Agency, which is represented by its Director, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for whom the Chairman is usually spokesman. They are the senior presidential advisers in their respective fields.

In addition to the foregoing, others who now regularly participate in Council meetings are the Secretary of the Treasury, who is the President's chief adviser on how national security dollars are to be provided; and the Director of the Bureau of the

Budget, who brings to the President a bird's-eye view of the various claims on the Government's annual income. President Eisenhower's inclusion of these latter two officials as Council participants is indicative of his conviction that one of the most essential elements of the national security is a strong and viable economy to which defense expenditures can be geared for the long pull.

From time to time, other department or agency heads attend Council meetings, by invitation of the President, to participate in matters on the agenda in which they have a particular interest or departmental responsibility. These may include the Ambassador to the United Nations, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretaries and the Chiefs of Staff of the three Armed Services, the Director of the International Coöperation Administration (formerly FOA), the Federal Civil Defense Administrator, the Director of the U.S. Information Agency, and the Chairmen of the President's Internal Security Committees. Likewise one or more of the special assistants to the President attend Council meetings on the President's invitation. They include the President's Special Assistant on Atomic Energy (likewise Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission); on Disarmament; on Foreign Economic Affairs; and on Coördinated Planning.

The Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs attends all meetings in carrying out his duties toward the Council — which will be later described. The secretariat function is carried out by the attendance of the Executive Secretary of the Council and his deputy. They attend all meetings.

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THE NSC functional structure today may be likened to a pyramid with the President and the Council at the apex. Along the base are four supporting elements — two created by statute, and two interdepartmental groups formed by executive order and presidential directive.

As above indicated, the National Security Act set up the Central Intelligence Agency, the affairs of which are managed by a Director. Here is established for the benefit of the Council the integrated Intelligence viewpoint; and through the Director, the Council keeps advised of the current world estimates by the Intelligence community. The Director reports, under the provisions of the statute, to the members of the National Security Council in the only corporate capacity in which the Council acts. In other words, the Council is a statutory Board of Directors for the CIA.

The second element at the base of the Council pyramid is an interdepartmental group which in one form or another has functioned since the organization of the Council. At present this group, operating pursuant to presidential directive, is called the NSC Planning Board, through which policy proposals flow upward to the Council.

Proposed national security policy papers normally are originated in the various departments whose heads are Council members, though the initial stimulus may have been a presidential request for study and recommendations, a similar request made in a Council meeting and approved by the President, or a departmental proposal. After departmental staff study and the contribution there of the specialists by area and subject, the paper goes to the National Security Council Planning Board. That group duplicates, at the Assistant Secretary level, the composition of the Council itself. Thus State, Defense, ODM, Treasury, and Budget have Planning Board members; CIA and JCS have advisers; and observers from Justice, AEC, and other agencies attend as their interests may require. These participants in Planning Board affairs are appointed by the President upon the recommendations of the department heads. The Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs presides over these meetings.

It is in the NSC Planning Board that every policy proposal is tested in lengthy discussions against the views of the Assistant Secretaries of the several participating departments as a sort of preliminary to the discussion which will take place in the Council later on. In this process of distillation the papers are modified, expanded, and generally rewritten.

There may be and often are departmental differences of views. And as the work progresses each Planning Board member is able to keep current with his department's reaction to proposed revisions, and check back with his Secretary between Planning Board meetings. Thus many differences are reconciled, much common ground is found, and many disagreements prove after full discussion to be illusory and not basic differences after all. But if an irreconcilable disagreement arises between the departments represented, the Planning Board must identify clearly the elements of the disagreement and spell out the alternative policy courses and reasons therefor so that they may be presented fully to the National Security Council.

Working in the same area as the Planning Board is the third element of support. It is a small permanent staff provided for by the statute, which serves under the Executive Secretary of the NSC and performs the technical service of digesting, analyzing, and arranging the mass of material flowing in to the Council daily. The work of this staff is independent of the departments whose heads make up the NSC, and its nonpartisan services are of great importance to the Council, to the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and to the NSC Planning Board in crystallizing the issues to be presented to the Council.

The most recent addition to the elements of

NSC support is the formation of the Operations Coördinating Board (OCB). This is an innovation of President Eisenhower's, and it is designed to round out the policy cycle by gearing departmental action to the achievement of national security objectives. The Board consists of the Under Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and other departmental representatives who parallel much of the membership of the NSC itself. This group in its regular weekly meetings seeks to ensure that agency programs in the international field are timely, consistent with each other, related each to the other, and best calculated to carry out presidentially approved policies.

The OCB is not an operating agency; its duty is to coördinate. This board receives reports and keeps under continuous review the status of national security programs being carried out by the various departments. It likewise informs the Council, by means of periodic reports, what action is being taken and what progress is being made toward the achievement of each policy objective. This fourth supporting element has provided a most meaningful adjunct to the functioning of the NSC.

What is the relation of the Council to other similar bodies which have existed in the Government from the earliest days? The answer is that they mesh well. The functions of the Council in no way impinge, for example, upon the prerogatives of the Cabinet. The NSC is no super Cabinet. Both bodies are advisory to the President and both have overflowing, but not overlapping, agenda. The degree of overlapping membership prevents conflicting actions. By and large, the Cabinet predominates in domestic affairs — matters relating to Justice; Post Office; Interior; Agriculture; Commerce; Labor; Health, Education, and Welfare; Civil Service; and the like. The Council, on the other hand, deals with national security strategy — and in a very intensive way.

Nor does the Council's work interfere with the operations of the State, Defense, or any other department having "action" responsibility in the broad field of national security. Actually the reverse is true. The result of the Council action is to broaden the base of support for the department which has primary responsibility for carrying out Administration policy. For one thing, the policy has been carefully hammered out and tested by the views of all the Council members. They have participated in its formulation, and there is the assurance that all affected departments in the Executive branch have, after full hearing, been directed by the President to coöperate in the implementation of the Executive policy adopted.

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THE National Security Council meets regularly in the Cabinet Room at the White House on Thursday mornings. The meetings normally last for about two and a half hours, although they sometimes last much longer.

The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs introduces each item on the Council agenda and gives a brief statement of its background and its relation to other existing national security policies. He states why the policy is up for revision; or, if it is a new proposal, why it has come before the Council, and how the Council has acted on it or related subjects before. He endeavors to make clear what is to be decided, what the alternatives are, any divergences of views, and what action is recommended by the NSC Planning Board.

The President always takes time to become thoroughly familiar with each subject on the Council agenda and all departmental differences which have not been resolved in the NSC Planning Board. This preparation is completed a day or so before each Council meeting in briefing sessions between the President and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, frequently attended by the Council's Executive Secretary. Thus, the President is able to make timely calls for additional information, as desired, and to sleep over the problems that are to be dealt with at the upcoming Council meeting. This process is duplicated in the various departments. In other words, the Planning Board members go over the agenda items with their princip[illegible] who are to sit in the NSC meeting.

Every member of the Council usually speaks in the meetings, and those others who attend are always free to speak — and frequently do. In the concept of President Eisenhower, Council members are not there simply to advocate the narrow departmental view for the special interest of their particular agency; nor are they there to act as rubber stamps. Rather they act as intimate advisers of the President in the last phase of deliberation before he makes decisions of the very greatest importance to the future of our country and of the world. As the President once put it, the function of the Council members "should be to search for and seek, with their background and experience, the most statesmenlike answers to the problems of national security."

The meetings of the Council are informal, and no transcript is taken of proceedings. A Record of Action is all that is made. This is a concise statement of the exact decisions or policy directives upon which the President has settled. After the first draft of the Record of Action has been prepared, it is circulated among all departments participating in Council affairs to give each of them an opportunity to comment and make suggestions. Then it is submitted to the President for his final scrutiny. This record, with such changes as the President may make before he approves it, then becomes national security policy.

Thus when the product of the National Security

Council takes written form, it may be the adoption, after Council revision, of a policy paper brought up through the Planning Board; a directive that old policy be reviewed and that recommended revisions thereof be brought back to the Council; or recorded decisions on any one of the many and varied subjects falling in the broad field of national security as defined by the statute.

The way the Council has functioned in recent years, with its frequent and sometimes lengthy meetings, represents a technique for forward policy formulation well calculated to take into account historical experience, to assess our present risks and commitments, and to seek out sound, long-term policy objectives. This is not crystal-ball gazing in any sense; it is a highly organized effort to look ahead realistically and to lay the proper groundwork for our nation's continued ability to discharge its responsibilities to ourselves and to the free world.

The NSC, still a relatively new mechanism in our Government, has become the helm from which the President looks out toward the broad horizon ahead and charts the world course we are to follow. He has, in the process, probed the thinking of his responsible ministers, in his presence, in the presence of one other, and all together; he has assessed their own thinking in the light of their experience, wisdom, and imagination and in the course of their debate; he has made his policy determination against the background of a full and free expression of the views of every minister who has a contribution to make or who will be affected by the action to be taken — all in a thoroughly prepared and intensive effort to bring to the reckoning a clearer foresight into the always murky future.

As a result of this process, there has been accumulated a reservoir of basic policy and forward strategy which today, though not inflexible and always subject to constant review and revision from time to time, nevertheless does represent certain fundamental concepts and contains identified guidelines for those departments in Government which are responsible for action. Such preparation seems well calculated to avoid the necessity for panic decisions.

This reservoir of policy guidance stands the nation in good stead during periods when the President must be away from his office, as President Eisenhower was last fall while recuperating in Denver. The heads of the various departments are in a position to carry on during such times with full knowledge of the continued validity of the broad policy concepts established by the President in the cumulative experience of the NSC. There continues, moreover, the momentum of the Executive team's integrated program in the field of national security affairs, forged in the case of President Eisenhower during more than a hundred weekly NSC meetings.

It might well be observed that the continued functioning of Government in such periods under a body of established policy exemplifies, in a real sense, the principle which John Adams wrote into the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780 — that ours is a Government of laws and not of men.

THE CHILD WHOSE NAME IS LOVE

by JOAN LA BOMBARD

Now the spectral moon
Rises in the thorn
The tiger will awake
The tiger-shape will come

Between three hushèd trees
That ring a sleeping child.
The fitful stars will leap
And the wind still.

The beast will velvet move
In circles round that bed
And evil's breath will hover
The child, whose name is love,
Whose name, whose name is love.

Now spectral leans the moon
The wind cries in the thorn
The tiger's crouchèd power
Shadows the sleeping one.
O who will wake and warn?

The child in sleep will stir
And lay Him on His side
And quietness will brood
Over that wounded bed.

Three hushèd trees will bleed.
Three hushèd trees will bleed
Great quietness will come
And the tiger kneel down.